



Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

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Testimony in Support of SB 4

An Act Concerning Connecticut's Present and Future Housing Needs

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Moore and Rep. Luxenberg, Vice Chairs Sen. Lesser and Rep. Khan, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Scott, and Distinguished Members of the Housing Committee

From: Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

On behalf of the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting SB 4, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Present and Future Housing Needs. The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs builds alliances among diverse constituencies to combat climate change, create jobs and promote racial, economic, and climate justice. The Roundtable seeks to build a worker-oriented environmental movement committed to securing a fair and just transition that protects both the environment and the livelihoods of workers and their communities.

We are in a housing crisis. In Connecticut, nearly half of renters (48.4%) spend 30% or more of their income on rent, demonstrating a high cost burden for housing.¹ Housing instability disrupts education and employment and negatively impacts public health. SB 4 would improve housing stability and quality for renters across the state.

SB 4 creates and funds a program to retrofit and repair homes in environmental justice communities by improving energy efficiency, installing solar panels, and remediating environmental hazards, protecting the health and well-being of low-income residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods and improving energy affordability for those who need it most. The installation of solar and other clean energy systems will increase the resilience of these communities in the face of extreme weather events, leaving them better prepared for the future. It will also help us meet our state's greenhouse gas reduction targets. Prioritizing the removal of common health hazards, such as gas leaks, mold, vermiculite, asbestos, lead, and radon, will improve indoor air quality and reduce pollution from inefficient housing. This bill will also create job opportunities for Connecticut residents who will be trained and placed in clean energy jobs.

The winter eviction moratorium provision makes it illegal to evict anyone from December through March protecting families from homelessness in hazardous weather. The bill caps rental increases at 4% plus inflation. SB 4 also directs the state to create a complaint form that tenants can fill out if their landlords are violating the law, but there needs to be stronger enforcement in the case of violations.

To further strengthen the bill, The winter eviction moratorium must include a provision for enforcement, such as a fine for landlords who evict their tenants during the winter. The bill should be strengthened by creating a government agency that is specifically in charge of enforcing tenants' rights, such as getting the security deposit back, requiring landlords to do routine maintenance, and ensuring the

¹ Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/son-2022-cost-burdens>

health and safety of the tenants. Further, the rent cap should include good cause eviction to prevent unfair evictions for the sake of raising rent higher than the cap allows.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director

Allison Pilcher, Policy Director

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www.ctclimateandjobs.org